

## Mystery Shopping Exercise Pilot – August/September 2015

### Do we meet our Customer Care Standards?

In order to test that we adhere to our Customer Care Standards, we asked Parents Carers Aiming High (PCAH) to contact teams/services to test our standards relating to telephone queries. The Services/teams they contacted for the exercise are as follows:

- Children's Centres
- Youth Connect
- Admissions and Transport Team
- Disabled Children's Team
- Family Information Service
- SEND Partnership Service

The following questions were given to the mystery shoppers, in order that we could measure their feedback against the customer care standards:

- **Was it easy to find the contact telephone number on the public website?**
- **Was your call answered in a reasonable amount of time - 46 seconds, 15 rings (not left waiting, no response)?**
- **Did the person answering the telephone clearly state their team/name?**
- **Did the person speak to you in a professional and polite manner?**
- **Did the person you speak with resolve your query/provide you with the information you required?**

### Results

In total, 13 responses were received.

#### **Was it easy to find the contact telephone number on the public website?**

13 out of 13 respondents answered 'yes' which is a clear indication for these services that they could find the right number for the required service.

#### **Was your call answered in a reasonable amount of time - 46 seconds, 15 rings (not left waiting, no response)?**

11 out of 13 respondents answered yes.

1 respondent answered in regards to the SEND Partnership Service that she left a voicemail message and was called back within 24 hours (the SEND Partnership Service is a term time service only and the voicemail message clearly states the

service opening hours).

1 respondent replied in regards to the Admissions and Transport Team that they did not get through and on the second attempt were advised to contact between 2pm – 5pm for admissions to Secondary School. She then called 3 times during this time window and was answered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt. (It must be noted that the time period when the respondent called was at the beginning of the new term when schools admissions are dealing with a very high volume of calls. The respondent was otherwise happy with the response she received – see questions/answers below).

**Did the person answering the telephone clearly state their team/name?**

12 out of 13 respondents replied that the person answering the telephone clearly stated their name plus the team name.

**Did the person speak to you in a professional and polite manner?**

13 out of 13 respondents answered 'yes'. Some of the comments included:

*“A very nice man called BH answered...very polite and professional.”*

*“I spoke to JB – very nice lady, polite and professional.”*

*“Very nice lady was very helpful and provided me with lots of information.”*

*“Very pleasant lady, approachable.”*

**Did the person you speak with resolve your query/provide you with the information your required?**

13 out of 13 respondents answered 'yes'

The feedback received from respondents again was very positive – below are a selection of comments:

*“Yes, she explained the service and referred me to another – very friendly and helpful”*

*“Extremely helpful, supplied relevant info, numbers and name of person I needed to contact. Also told me when they would be at the One Stop Shop”*

*“Yes, very helpful – supplied very useful info in a friendly way”*

*“Yes – resolved my query”*

## What does the exercise show?

The Mystery Shopper exercise has provided us with very positive results:

- All respondents felt that their queries were resolved/provided with the right information at the first point of contact (did not have to make further phone calls or felt that they did not receive the right information).
- The majority of respondents stated that their call was answered in a reasonable amount of time (in the two cases where the calls were not answered, the SEND Partnership Service clearly outlines their service hours and availability on their voicemail message, and the respondent was contacted within 24 hours. In regards to the Admissions and Transport team, the respondent called at the beginning of the new school term. On her second call she was advised the time period to try again and when she did get through she felt she was treated politely, professionally and offered to post information to the respondent as could not print from her own PC.

## Future Actions

For Bath and North East Somerset Council, this exercise shows our commitment to putting the customer at the “heart of everything we do” as stated in our 20/20 Vision.

However, there is always room for improvement and this exercise is a small snapshot of the services that the People and Communities Directorate provide and does not include dealing with customer queries in writing, through social media, in person etc.

The next steps are therefore to organise a more structured, in depth mystery shopping exercise across the above areas, and to publish the results of any future exercises to show that we are meeting our Customer Care standards in these areas. This will be towards the end of 2015/beginning of 2016.

**Many thanks to Parent Carers Aiming High (PCAH) for conducting this exercise!**